

Gastrell (F)
A
MORAL PROOF
OF THE
CERTAINTY
OF
A Future State.

The SECOND Edition.



L O N D O N

Printed for WILLIAM and JOHN INNYS,
at the West End of St. Paul's.
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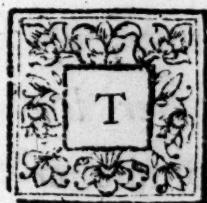
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THE
P R E F A C E.



*THE Humour of thinking
and writing freely upon
the Subject of Religion be-
ing now carried to that
pitch, that neither Reason can correct,*

The Preface.

nor Law put a Stop to it ; the best way to answer all Cavils and Objections, and to determine all Controversies and Disputes upon this important Matter, will be, to begin all a-new ; to lay aside all Prejudices and Prepossessions, both for and against Religion ; and to suppose our selves just now entring upon the Enquiry, Whether there be any such thing or no ?

AND whoever will put himself into this Situation, must immediately be convinced, that the First Question to be resolved is, Whether there be any Future State appointed for Man : Whether, after this Life ended, we shall ever live again, and be sensible of Happiness or Misery hereafter : For, if there be no such State, then (as it will plainly appear

The Preface.

pear from the following Discourse) we have no occasion to enquire any farther ; and all the Glorious Things which have been spoken of Religion, Reason, and Truth, will be wiped out and defaced : But if we are once convinced, that there will be a Future State of Happiness and Misery ; this one Principle will easily lead us into all necessary Truths, and most of those Religious Difficulties, which seemed formidable before, will vanish before us.

THE Proof of this single Point is here attempted, in such a manner as no Free-Thinker can object to. And, if any of them can be brought to a serious Belief of this one Article, it will, I am persuaded, be no hard matter to give him Satisfaction upon any other head relating to
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The Preface.

Religion, from *whatever* common Principles of Reason he himself shall think fit to lay down.

A FEW Copies of this Discourse were printed about Seven Years ago, and communicated only to some particular Friends of the Author, without any intention then of making it more publick: But several other Discourses of the like nature and tendency having been lately published, and the Thoughts of People being at present earnestly engaged in Enquiries into the First Principles both of Natural and Revealed Religion; 'tis humbly hoped, that this small Treatise may, at this time, contribute something toward promoting the same good Ends which are aimed at by those Learned Writers who, by the late bold Attempts of Unbelievers, have been
called

The Preface.

*called out to defend our common Faith ;
and who have done it (as far as I can
judge) with greater strength and clear-
ness of Reasoning, than was ever done
before.*



BOOKS

BOOKS printed for WILLIAM and
JOHN INNYS.

1. **A**N Enquiry into the Evidence of the Christian Religion, 8vo. *Cambr.* 1728.
2. A Defence of the Validity of the English Ordinations, and of the Succession of the Bishops in the Church of *England*; together with Proofs justifying the Facts advanced in this Treatise. Written in French by the Reverend Father *Peter Francis le Courayer*, Canon Regular and Librarian of *St. Geneviève of Paris*; translated into English by *Daniel Williams*, Presbyter of the Church of *England*: To which is prefix'd a Letter from the Author to the Translator. The Second Edition, 8vo. 1728.
3. A Defence of the Dissertation on the Validity of the English Ordinations, against the several Answers made to it; with proper Vouchers for the Facts advanced in that Work. By the Author of the Dissertation. In 2 vol. 8vo. 1728.
4. A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection. By *William Law*, A. M. 2d Edit. 8vo. 1728.
5. Reflections on Ridicule; in 2 vol. in 12mo. 4th Edit. 1727.
6. *Chambers's* Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences; in 2 vol. fol. 1728.
7. Sixty Sermons preach'd on several Occasions by *George Smalridge*, D. D. late Lord Bishop of *Bristol*. The Second Edition, fol. 1727.
8. A Dictionary, *Italian and English*, and *English and Italian*; containing all the Words of the *Vocabulary della Crusca*, and several Hundreds more taken from the most approved Authors; with Proverbs and familiar Phrases; by *F. Altieri*, Professor of the *Italian Tongue* in *London*, 2 vol. 1726.



A
MORAL PROOF
OF THE
CERTAINTY
OF
A Future State.



THE Notion of a *Future State*, in which Men will be *rewarded* or *punished*, according to what they have done in this Life, is so agreeable to the common Reason of Mankind, that the wisest among the *Heathen* believed it upon the Strength of mere *natural*

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Principles only, without any Assistance from *Revelation*. And now, since *Life and Immortality* are brought to light through the Gospel, not only the *Wise and Prudent*, but the *Simple and Unlearned*, are fully satisfy'd of the Truth of this Doctrine. This is the main Article of a Christian's Faith, the Foundation of all his Hopes, and the End of all his Labours.

THE *Scriptures* indeed are exceeding plain in this Point; so that whoever admits the Testimony of these sacred Writings, must needs believe a *Resurrection to Eternal Life*: But then it is to be observed, that the Plainness of the Revelation is, it self, one great Occasion why this *necessary* and *fundamental* Article of all Religion is more questioned now than ever it was: The Reason of which is, that the Misery and Torment prepared for Sinners, in another World, is every where throughout the *New Testament* set forth and represented to us under such lively and affecting Figures, and with such Circumstances of Terror and Despair; and the Threats of Divine Vengeance are so solemn and peremptory, that those who cannot live up to the Rules of the Gospel are disposed to say, that *God hath not spoken to us at all in times past*; that

that so they may avoid the Obligation of believing that he will *judge us at the Last Day*.

IT is in vain therefore to reason with such Men on *Judgment to come*, out of *Scripture*; the only way to convince them of the Certainty of a future State is, to prove it to them from such Principles as are common to all Mankind; such as lie within every Man's reach, and such as they must acknowledge and feel in themselves to be true, without any *external Authority*, or *Influence*, to direct them. And, were such Conviction once thoroughly wrought in them, all their other Objections to the *revealed Word of God* would easily be removed.

MANY are the Arguments suggested to us by *natural Reason*, and made use of both by *Heathens* and *Christians*, to prove the *Immortality* of Man; but none can possibly have more Weight with a rational Creature than such as are taken from the Consideration of the *End* and *Design of his Being*. This is the peculiar Distinction, and boasted Privilege of our Nature, to guide our selves, to direct our own Ways, to *chuse the Good*, and *refuse the Evil*: But this cannot be done without pointing our Actions to some End or other. In order therefore to act *reasonably*,

it is of the first Importance to us to consider, what is *the best or most proper End* we ought to aim at.

THE wisest among the Ancients of every sort, who owned a *God*, believed him to be the *Author* and *Maker* of all other things; the immediate Consequence of which Opinion was, that every thing was ordered by him for some *wise End* or Purpose. And even those who supposed every thing to exist *without* either *Beginning*, or *Cause*; and those also who ascribed the Original of all things to some *other Cause* besides *God*, did all agree in this, that every Being in the World, however it came to exist, had some particular End to which it was directed, and which, by its natural Frame and Disposition, it was fitted to attain. But, if we set aside the Consideration of a *Future State*, it will necessarily follow, that Man was neither *made by God*, nor *made to any End or Purpose at all*. Which monstrous Absurdities are no otherwise to be avoided, than by acknowledging the Truth of this Proposition, *viz.* that *the true End of Man, and the only Reason of humane Life assignable, is, to serve God here, in order to be happy in his Favour hereafter.*

THIS

THIS alone (if it can be proved) is sufficient to demonstrate *the Certainty and Necessity of a Future State*. And this I shall endeavour to make good in the following Discourse.

I. BY a positive and direct Proof, taken from the Nature of Man, and the Circumstances of his Condition in this World.

II. BY shewing, that all other Ends, which Men do, or can, propose to themselves, are either unsuitable and improper, or unattainable.

III. BY observing, that all the common Judgments of Mankind, relating to their Being and Conduct in this World, which have hitherto been reckoned unquestionable, if there be no future State, must be pronounced false.

I. IN the first place then I am to make out the Truth of this Proposition, *viz.* that *the true End of Man, and the only Reason of human Life assignable, is, to serve God here, in order to be happy in his Favour hereafter*; by a positive direct Proof taken from *the Nature of Man, and the Circumstances of his Condition in this World*.

AND, wherever we turn our Thoughts, which way soever we direct our Enquiries,
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this Reflection will offer it self. Whatever View we take of Man, we shall find the Prospect continually enlarging upon us, till it open into *another World*. But, if that be only an *imaginary State*, then every thing we meet with here will come under the Character either of *Mystery*, or *Delusion*, and we shall be fure of nothing but *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*. For, unless we are to live again, it is impossible to give any tolerable Reason why we ever *existed at all*: Except this be allowed, we can never explain why we were *made and fashioned after such a manner*: and, should we suppose the contrary, many of the *Capacities, Inclinations, and Desires* of our Nature must be accounted utterly uselefs and vain. If there be no future State, the Foundations of all *Virtue and Religion* will be entirely overthrown: And not only so, but many of our *Sins* also will appear more unreasonable and extravagant than now they do.

TO shew this more particularly; let us consider first the *Shortness, and Uncertainty*, of human Life. When the Days of Man are said to be *as Grass, as a Shadow, as a Tale that is told*, we consent to the Comparisons, that they are just, and we acknowledge all the Resemblances of this nature to be true: But
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which way shall we account for this Truth? How is it possible to imagine that such a scanty uncertain term of Being, as we now enjoy, is all that belongs to us, and that we are to have no other Portion or Inheritance but this? Upon such a Supposition these Questions will be always asked, and never resolved: What mean all those Faculties of *Reasoning* and *Reflection* that we are conscious of, when we have not room to employ them in? Why were we endued with *Wisdom from on high*? and, why was *the Spirit of Counsel and Understanding* given us? only to lengthen out the scanty Measure of a Span, and to add a few Words to an insipid Tale? Had this been all our Business here, why was not our Sight bounded accordingly? If Man were made for this Life only, and not design'd to aim at any thing beyond it, why were not all his Desires and Expectations confined within the Compass of his Being? When the time allotted us to appear in is but a Span long, why are we continually reaching out into Eternity, and never satisfy'd with any thing less than *infinite*? When we have attained to the Age of Man, what means that Desire of living on? Why do we put the Thoughts of Death far from us, and do what we can to nourish in

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our selves the Hopes of Immortality? Were there no future State appointed for us, the Wisdom of him that made us would have so ordered it, that we should neither have feared to die, nor desired to live beyond the Time allotted us. He would likewise have fashioned our Thoughts after such a manner, that we should have had no Designs or Pursuits but what were proper to this Life, and lay within our reach: We should have been fully satisfied with whatever we were capable of doing, or procuring, for our selves, without extending our Endeavours or Desires any farther: We should not then have look'd upon what had pass'd before we had a Beginning; nor should we have reached forward into the Ages to come, and desired to live for ever: We should not have perceived that we *were but of Yesterday*, and were to be *gone To-morrow*; but our Thoughts being all confined to the present Time, we should have walked straight on in the way we were in, without knowing from whence we set out, or whither we were going. Nay, had our Days been shortned into Hours, we should have been as well contented with the Term assigned us; and none of the many Accidents, that now continually threaten our Life, would have given

given us the least Apprehension of our being cut off before our Time.

THUS it is reasonable to think we should have been made and disposed, if there were no other Life but this ; so that, had our stay here been never so short and uncertain, it would have been all one to us ; because we should not then have had the Misfortune of knowing the difference between a shorter and a longer Period. But now we find ourselves very uneasy under these Thoughts, and we are amazed to consider, that we should be so curiously wrought and put together, and at the same time continually subject to be broken into Dust again, and scattered upon the Face of the Earth ; that it should be so long before we come to our Strength, and so much longer before we attain to any considerable Degrees of Knowledge ; that, during this time, so much Care and Assistance should be necessary to bring us up to such a State ; and that, after all, when we have escaped innumerable Dangers in getting thus far, we should have but a short while to enjoy the Fruits of our own and other Peoples Labours, and should be constantly exposed to fresh Hazards of being snatch'd away, before we come to those Bounds which we are sure we cannot pass.

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BUT, had we a longer and more certain Continuance here, the next Enquiry will be, Why were we *born to Trouble*? Why are we always desiring, and reaching out after Happiness, and yet constantly subject to *Pain* and *Misery*? And what means all that *Calamity* and *Affliction* that befalls the Children of Men? *If in this Life only we have Hope*, if there be no *Recompense* or *Reward* to be expected hereafter, there is no tolerable Account to be given why we are so ill provided for in this World. Had we no Prospect of a future Inheritance, it is most reasonable to believe, that our present Portion would have been better than it now is; that the few Days we had to live would have past away without Trouble or Sorrow; and, that we should all have been pleased with the good things that were set before us, and have been always easy and well satisfied with the Condition we were in, whatever it was.

THIS undoubtedly is most suitable to all the Notions we have of what is *regular* and *just*. And thus we find it ordered in all the other parts of Nature. There are no other Beings, within our Observation, which are liable to Sorrow and Affliction but *Man*; at least he is the only Being that knows himself to be
 miserable,

miserable, and is capable of complaining that he is so. For, whatever Pain we can suppose the *Beasts that perish* feel, it is all in present: They have no Concern for what is past, nor any Apprehensions of what is to come. And, if we were to perish in the same manner as they do, why should not our Condition be like theirs, in this respect also? Why should we be disposed to enquire into the Consequences of things? and to consider what may happen to us, at a great Distance off? And why are our *Souls disquieted within us*, by the Fears and Apprehensions of Evils to come, if there were not some future Dispensation, which concerned us more, and deserved to be more in our Thoughts, than any thing about which we are now employ'd can do? And what Reason can be alledg'd, why we should be troubled for any thing that is past, and which, by being past, could not possibly create us the least Uneasiness, without our own Reflection upon it? This is no ways to be explained, without allowing such a thing as *Guilt*. Were we not capable of acting ill, and liable to be punished for it, we should never be conscious of any Pain or Anguish for what we had done: For either our Actions would be forgotten, as soon as past; or

we should be as easy in remembring, as we were in doing them. But now, the *Memory* of our past Actions often disturbs us; and we are often wishing that we had done otherwise than we did: Which would be perfectly in vain, and to no purpose, if we had never done what was *Evil*, and were not obnoxious to *Punishment*. But, upon a Supposition that we have *sinned*, and done wickedly, the present Pain, which arises from Reflection, is not only a suitable Punishment for our Offence, but a proper Method of exciting us to *repent* of the Evil, and to take more Care to avoid the like for the future, *lest some worse thing come unto us*. Upon these Grounds, it is very fit and reasonable for us, to be concerned for what is past; but, if there be no such things as *Sin*, and *Punishment*, then is all our Trouble of this kind vain, and *Memory* and *Reflection* serve only to create us unnecessary and unaccountable Torments.

ANOTHER common Observation, which leads us into the Belief of a *future State*, is, the natural Aversion we have to *Death*, and the strong Desire we find in our selves to continue our Being for ever.

THIS we are sensible of in all the various Circumstances of our Condition here. For
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let a Man's Life be never so long, and easy, he will always desire to live, and to be easy, longer. And, let him abound as much as he will in all the good things of this World, he will never have enjoyed so much of them, as to be able to quit them all freely, and to depart, as a Man rises from a Feast, full and satisfied. And on the other hand, tho' our present Estate be very low and mean, tho' Difficulties and Troubles compass us about on every side; and tho' we are told, that there is no Pain or Sorrow in the Grave; that *there the Weary be at rest*, and the Poor are free from Oppression; yet are we solicitous to live on, and had rather cherish in our selves a faint and uncertain Hope of being happy some time or other, than put an end to all our Thoughts and Expectations of this Nature by Death. So that, whatever *part* we have in this *Book of Life*, it is impossible to set Bounds to our Desires of living; and there must be a mighty Weight of Misery indeed upon us, before we can persuade our selves to chuse *Death* before *Life*.

IT is moreover very strange to observe, what pains we take to fence against this necessary and unavoidable Law of *dying*: And how many Devices and Contrivances we have to
lengthen

lengthen out an imaginary Life in the Memory of other Men, when we our selves shall have no Sense or Knowledge of any thing that is done under the Sun. This is oftentimes the chief Aim of *the Wise, the Learned, and the Great*, to make themselves a Name, and to be honoured and respected in the Ages to come. With this View only have Statues been set up, Edifices erected, Books written, and many difficult and hazardous Works performed. And even the *lowest* among the People do many things upon this poor Prospect, that some body or other hereafter will thank them for what they have done, or at least make some kind mention of them. So that nothing appears more natural, than for Men of every Rank to please themselves with thinking, that they shall be remembred, and talk'd of after they are gone ; that they shall have *Lands, and Houses, and Children, that are called by their Name* ; that *Posterity* shall *praise their Sayings* ; and that the Signs and Tokens of what they have done shall continue to many Generations. But why is all this Care and Concern employed to prolong our being without End, if we are shut up within the narrow Bounds of this World, and cannot pass from Death to Life again ? and, Why do
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we extend our Thoughts and Designs to what shall come after us, if we are going to *a Land where all things are forgotten*? Surely all these natural Sentiments, and Desires, which we feel in our Souls, have some real Foundation, and we have some *future Interest* to pursue, however we may be mistaken in the Nature of what we seek for.

A N D, as the *Weaknesses, Imperfections, and Defects*, which we find in our present Condition, make it highly reasonable for us to expect some better and more perfect State hereafter, so, if we take a view of Man in all his *Glory*, and consider the most *noble and excellent Capacities of his Nature*, with all the Advantages that *Art and Industry* can give him, we shall from hence also be easily led to the same Conclusion.

FOR, to what End and Purpose are all our Endeavours after *Greatness and Perfection*? and, For what Reason do we strive to excel in *Knowledge and Wisdom*; if, after all the Pains we have taken, and all the Improvements we have made, we shall in a very short time fall back again to a level, not only with the basest and most foolish of Men, but even with the Brute Creatures, and such as have no Understanding given them? Why are some
Men

Men exalted on high above their Brethren, and *cloathed* with so much *Majesty* and *Honour* as to be styled *Gods* ? And whence comes it to pass, that some are *wise according to the Wisdom of an Angel of God*, when they must all, not only *die like other Children of Men*, but *become like the Beasts that perish* ? Were we not designed for some higher and more excellent Condition hereafter than what we enjoy here, we should not, in all likelihood, have been thus distinguished in this World ; or, at least, we should not have been sensible of the Difference. *The Ignorant and Foolish* would not then have desir'd to understand Knowledge ; nor would *the Wise* have rejoyced in their Wisdom ; *the Base* would not have respected *the Honourable*, neither would the *Princes* and *mighty Men* of the Earth have gloried in their Power. For so we see it ordered among all the other Ranks of living Creatures : As they had all the same Original, and are all to perish alike, so is their Condition much the same while they live : There is no *Pre-eminence* or *Superiority* established among them ; neither are any of them capable of designing to advance themselves, or of attaining to any Degrees of Perfection above the rest of their kind ; much less is one

Generation of them greater or wiser than another. And such also, our Reason tells us, would have been the state of Mankind, were there no better portion provided for them, than for their fellow Creatures. Had they no *Prize to receive* after Death, they would all *run the race* of Life with equal steps ; none of them *would strive for mastery*, none *seek to excel*. There would be no *corruptible Crowns* to be obtained upon *Earth*, were there not *an incorruptible Crown laid up for us in the Heavens* : And no man would search for Wisdom, were there no other *place of understanding*, but this *Land of the Living*. All the Advantages that have been gained to humane Nature, by the united Industry of Mankind ; all the Dignities and Prerogatives they have asserted to themselves ; all the stock of Knowledge they have gathered together, and all the advances they have ever made towards Perfection in any kind, together with all the astonishing effects of their Power, if there be no future State, are not only useless, and vain, but render Man more ridiculous and contemptible, in his own Eyes, when he seeth that *they which are exalted for a little while are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the Ears of Corn*, and all

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their Excellency and their Glory perish with them.

BUT the truth of a *future Dispensation* will be rendred still more evident, from all the notions of *Religion* and *Virtue* that have obtained in the World.

IF GOD made Man, (as no doubt he did) it will easily be allow'd by all, that have any knowledge of God, that he made him for his *own Glory*; for he could be under no Force or Obligation to exercise his creating Power; and he himself must be, some way or other, the *End*, as well as *Author*, of all his own Works. What other way then is it possible for Man to promote the *Glory of God*, but by *worshipping* him, and employing those Faculties which he hath given him, in the service of his Maker? And how can the Almighty justify his Honour and Wisdom in making Man, but by *distinguishing between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*; by preparing such a state of Life for him, as is every way suitable to his Nature; and by putting him into a capacity of enjoying it? Since therefore we are well assured, that our present condition in this World is not such as answers all the Ends and Purposes of our Being; it plainly follows, that
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God hath appointed some other, and better State for us.

BUT, if we are not to worship and obey God, how came the Notion of such a Being to be impressed upon our Minds? Of what use is it to us, that we have any Knowledge either of him, or his Laws? Why are our Souls concerned about the nature and success of our Actions? And, to what End do we enquire how we shall be disposed of hereafter? If we are under no Obligations of Religion, all such Thoughts and Considerations as these are perfectly in vain, and our Souls are foolishly and irregularly contrived. For, upon such a Supposition as this, that Religion does not belong to us, we ought to have been so made, that it had been utterly impossible for us to form any Notions, or receive any Impressions of this kind.

AS therefore we justly argue, that such Beings, as know not God, can be under no Obligation to serve him, so is it certainly true of those that do know him, that they are, for that very reason, obliged to worship and obey him, according to the extent of their Knowledge; because otherwise all their *Knowledge of God and Providence*, all their *Sense of Religion*, all their *Conscience of Duty and*

Guilt, would be perfectly vain and unprofitable.

A N D so would all their *Piety and Virtue* be also, if there never were to be any other disposition of things than what we observe in the common course of this World: For, if *the Wicked* should always fare as well, and oftentimes better, than *the Righteous* do, in this Life; and there never will be any other difference between them hereafter; then would it be just and reasonable to say, *It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance?* Why does our *Reason* forbid us the present enjoyment of many things that are agreeable to us, if there will never come a time when we shall be made amends for our *Self-denial*? Why should we spend the short time of our Pilgrimage here in conquering our Passions, mortifying our Lusts and Affections, and in raising and exalting our Minds, and rendring them as pure and spiritual as we can, if, as soon as the Work be done, or perhaps before, we are cut off for ever, without receiving any fruit of all our Labours? If the same *Wages* are due to *Sin* and *Virtue*; and *all things concerning Man have an end in Death*, why are our *Reason* and *Inclination* contrary to one another?

ther? Why are our Minds distracted with different Commands? Why do not all Men chuse, and pursue the same things alike, or else agree to leave themselves every Man to his own Way, and to approve of what every Man does? Were there no *future State of Rewards and Punishments*, it is highly probable, that Reason and Inclination would have been always of the same side, and never have given us any Trouble, by contradicting each other: We should then have been so contrived, as to like nothing but what was proper for us, and to condemn nothing which we had once approved and done.

BUT, as it is now ordered, not only all our *Notions of Religion*, and *Dispositions to Virtue*, but even our very *Sins and Irregularities*, plainly shew, that we were made and design'd for a *future State*. Our *Pride, Ambition*, and *Covetousness*, are built upon the natural Desires and Expectations we have of some greater and happier Condition than what we are capable of in this World; without which Support they could have found no place in our Souls: For, what account can be given why we should magnify and exalt our selves on high, and never think we are arrived at the top of what belongs to us?

or

or why we should be continually endeavouring to enlarge our Power, to extend our Possessions, and to multiply our Wealth, without ever being satisfied with what we have gained, if there be nothing in Nature capable of answering all our Desires, and filling up the measure of our Hopes? Had our *Spirits* been of the same *original* with our *Bodies*, and were they to return to *Dust* again, there is great reason to believe that *Pride* would have been *hid from Man*, and that he would never have valued himself above what he was. Were *all the Days of Man* to be but *four-score*, or *a hundred Years*, he would not be heaping up Wealth, and laying in a stock of Provisions for many Generations, and be as diligent and busy in this Work, when he was just going out of the World, as he had been any time before, when he had a larger Portion of Life to come; and all this to please himself only, without any regard at all to those that were to come after him. With the same reason ought we to conclude, that, had we nothing to hope for beyond the Grave, we should not be employ'd in such Projects and Designs, of advancing our Condition, and establishing our Reputation in the World, as could not be effected in our time;

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the progress and completion of which, would be the Work of many Ages, and would require the continual diligence of Posterity to maintain. It is very plain therefore, that all the *proud, covetous, and ambitious* Thoughts and Desires of Man, which, if there be a God, and a *future State*, are *wicked and punishable* ; if there be none, are *absurd and ridiculous*, and have no manner of Foundation to support them. But the same Desires and Affections, when placed upon *religious Objects*, are *just and reasonable* ; because we shall find in *another Life* what will fully answer and satisfy all our hopes and expectations in *this* : For, there we shall be as *great*, and as *glorious*, and as *rich*, in all good things, as we can wish ; and *Enjoyment* shall then be every way proportionable to *Desire*.

IF therefore *Man was made and fashioned by God* ; if there be any Signs or Tokens of *Wisdom* discernible in our frame ; if all those *natural Sentiments, Desires, and Tendencies* we have observed in our Souls, are not wholly *insignificant and false* ; it is very evident that the *true End* of our present Life is, to serve God here, in expectation of such a State of Being hereafter, as will be in all respects
suitable.

suitable to the Desires and Capacities of our *Spiritual Nature*.

II. AND as this appears plainly by a *direct Proof*, taken from the *Nature and Condition of Man*, to be the *true End* for which we were made, and to which all our Actions ought to be directed ; so I shall endeavour to give a fuller Proof of the Certainty of this Doctrine, by shewing, that *all other Ends*, which Men do or can propose to themselves, are either *unsuitable and improper*, or *unattainable*.

NOW, if we take a Survey of Man in all his Thoughts and Employments, we shall soon find, that there neither is, nor can be, any other general End of human Pursuit, but *Life, Indolence, or Happiness* : The two first of which, are not in themselves worth our care, and the other is not attainable in this State ; and therefore we must carry our View farther if we would live to any purpose. And, if there be a future State worth our seeking for, there is no doubt to be made, but *Religion* is the true and only Way to it.

THERE are abundance of Men who seem to live only for the sake of *Life*, whose whole business and design it is to support and continue themselves in being as long as they can,
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and to spin out their Thread as far as it will go: *They rise up early, and late take rest: they go forth to their Work, and to their Labour, until the Evening*: and all the end of their Care and Trouble is, that they may have *Bread to eat*: And their *daily Bread* serves them to no other purpose, but to enable them for their *daily Labour*. This is, and hath been, in all Ages, the Condition of the far greatest part of Mankind throughout the World. And can we possibly imagine, that this was all they were made for? Cannot we be fed without our *taking continual thought for our Life*? And is it necessary that our *Souls* should be entirely imploy'd in providing for our *Bodies*? Let us *consider the Ravens*; for *they neither sow, nor reap, they neither have Storehouse, nor Barn, and yet God feedeth them*. How much more are we worse than the *Fowls*, if we have nothing else to do here, but to seek after those things which are provided for *them*, without *their* Care? If the Case be thus with Mankind, what Advantage do we receive from those Noble Faculties and Powers which distinguish us from the *Beasts that perish*? If all our reasoning and foresight, all our sagacity and contrivance, are laid out in providing

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merely for *Life* and *Substance*, wherein are we better than other Creatures, who are maintained in their proper state of being, an easier and surer way, without the help of *Thought* and *Reason*?

WE must certainly have some greater Occasion for our *Souls*; and no Man can be so absurd, as to think that we were sent into this World for no other reason, but to labour to stay here as long as we can; and, that we have no other Business to do, while we are here, but to prop up and support our *Houses of Clay*, whose foundation is in the Dust.

IN the next place therefore let us examine the Pretence of those, who, to the general imployment of *preserving Life*, add the care of *living easy*, and *free from Trouble*; who, besides answering the necessary Demands of Nature, propose to divert and amuse themselves, to put their Minds into a quiet posture, and to keep off all troublesome Thoughts and Impressions.

SUCH, we all know, is our present Portion in this Life, that we are condemned to eat our Bread, not only *in the sweat of our Face*, but *with Carefulness and Sorrow*: So that our chief business and concern here seems to be, to make our Burden fit as light and easy upon

upon us as we can, and to get rid of the present trouble we feel from every state we happen to be in ; for so are we made, that, whatever Work we are engaged in, we are often desiring to shift our posture ; and, which way soever our Thoughts are imployed, we frequently want to have them turned into another Channel. The chief support of a labouring Man, is the prospect of Rest ; and those that are most busy and active in the former part of their Lives, often propose no other End to themselves, but to sit still and be quiet in their latter Days. And yet, if we continue any time idle, and undetermined ; if our Souls are not constantly relieved by a succession of suitable Objects to act upon, even *Rest*, and *want of Business*, soon become grievous to us. In order therefore to remove all this pain and uneasiness of thought, to which we are subject, in every condition of Life, a thousand Ways and Contrivances have been found out, which all pass under the name of *Amusement* ; forasmuch as the true and proper design of them is, not to *procure* us *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction*, but only to *lay* or *prevent Pain* ; and they have commonly no other effect upon us, but that of keeping the Soul in an equal poize, or state of indifference,

so as it is not much affected, or strongly moved any way.

THIS is the settled Choice, and this is the whole Aim of several Men, who, in the general distribution of the things of this World had a larger share allotted them than others, and, who are, upon that account, exempted from all the bodily toil and labour to which the rest of their Brethren are condemned: All the *Pleasure* they feel, or desire, is, *not to be in Pain*; they move on constantly in a round of little insignificant Actions; the same train of Thoughts keeps their Minds always easy and unbent; and no Overtures for change, tho' accompany'd with Promises of greater advantage and satisfaction than what they now enjoy, are hearkened to, or admitted, for fear of some unforeseen trouble or pain, that may possibly, upon the least variation of their conduct, break in upon them. And what do they get by all this? To what purpose are they *always* fencing and guarding against *pain*? Could they be so fortunate as to obtain their End; could they manage so, as to pass thro' Life gently and smoothly, and to keep their Souls quiet and free from any shock or disturbance, wherein would the Wisdom and Advantage of their Being appear? and, What
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Proof would this be, that it was for the honour of God to make them? Had Men no other aim in living, but just to avoid the Trouble and Disquiet to which they are continually exposed, there would be very little difference to be made between *Life*, and *Death*; only *Death* would be the securer state of the two. If it is better *not to be at all*, than *to be miserable*, as every body that consults either his Sense or his Reason, must confess; then, *not to be at all*, and *to be just void of Trouble and Pain*, are much the same thing; there's very little or no reason for preferring either condition to the other, were a Choice in this case possible to be imagined: And consequently, were there no other End of all the Thoughts and Actions of Man but this, all that wonderful and astonishing Contrivance of human Nature, which we now admire, must be pronounced altogether vain.

BUT we have nobler Designs to boast of; 'tis *Happiness* we have in view; and this, as we give out, is the End of all our Desires and Pursuits. But, if we search after Happiness, without taking *Religion* and a *future State* into the account, our Pretences will prove groundless, and our Labour will all be lost.

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FOR, *where is Happiness to be found in the Land of the living? and, Who knoweth the place thereof?* The wisest Men in the old *Heathen World*, who had gone the farthest of any in the search of Truth, were not able to determine, wherein consisted the *chief Good* of Man, whether in *Contemplation*, or *Action*; in *Motion*, or *Tranquillity*; in *conquering*, or in *gratifying our Passions*; in the *rational*, and *moral Improvements of the Mind*, or in the *enjoyments of Sense*. Neither are the *Children of this present World*, how wise soever they may seem to be in *their Generation*, any better agreed in this first and most necessary Article, which is the foundation of all human Conduct: For, in the Ends which they propose to themselves, such *variety*, and *contradiction* is found, that they all stand amazed at one another's Choice. Every one condemns and ridicules his Neighbour, for not living as he does; and they look upon the several Views and Designs of one another with mutual Pity and Contempt.

AND as the *Notions* and *Sentiments* which Men entertain concerning their *chief Good*, are very different; so are also the *Means* employed by them, for obtaining what they represent to themselves under that character.

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Whatever end it be that they fix upon, they are generally at a loss to know which is the right way to it. The same Men are often changing their Rules and Methods of acting, and different Persons are frequently observed to take the most contrary Measures, in order to compass the same point. How is it then possible to conceive, that *the Happiness of this World* should be the *ultimate End* of all human Endeavour and Pursuit, when we neither know *what it is*, nor *how to obtain what we imagine it to be*. Should we suppose all Mankind *running the Race* of Life, without having any *Goal fix'd*, or *Course mark'd out* for them; what a wild confused Image would this present to our Thoughts, of vast multitudes, running to and fro, in different paths, and frequently crossing and jostling one another; some enquiring which is the Way, some turning back, others striking into new Roads, none at rest, none at the end of their Course, all dropping down one after another, tired and desponding, without receiving any Prize or Reward of their continual strife and labour? And yet this is but an imperfect representation of the vanity and folly of all pretences to Happiness in this Life, where neither the *End*, nor the *Means* of living are certain;

tain ; where no body can inform us which is our *chief Good* ; or which is the *best way of procuring what is so called*, whatever it be.

BUT were any of the Sons of Men secure of both these points ; were they wise enough to take *true aims*, and to *direct their steps aright* ; yet how often are they crossed or disappointed in their Pursuits, by such accidents, as no human foresight could prevent ? How many of them are cut off, before they arrive at *the Haven where they would be* ? What infinite Pains, Cares, and Endeavours have been thrown away by Men, whose Happiness hath been torn from them, or who have been snatched from *that*, just when they were entering into possession ? And after all, when the hopes, even of the *Wise* and the *Prudent*, are accomplish'd, how often does Experience destroy the Scene which Imagination has painted ? And how close do Weariness and Disgust commonly follow after Enjoyment ?

THUS doth every Man walk in a vain *show*, some being always enquiring *who will shew them any good* ; others running after every Guide they meet with, without asking any Questions : Some being diligent and earnest in the pursuit of what they never find, others contriving how to rid themselves of what they have

have with great Pains acquired; the best and wisest of them complaining, that they have often been deceived, and disappointed, have often *laboured for very Vanity*, have often *been disquieted in vain*. But, this is not the worst of our Case; for Man is *born to Trouble*, as well as *Vanity*: Sorrow and Affliction attend us in every state; and whatever be the *portion of our Cup*, there will always be a mixture of *Bitterness* in it.

The *Troubles* and *Miseries* of human Life, which do either immediately cleave to our *Nature*, or result from the ordinary course of Things in *Society*, and which we cannot, by any care or foresight of our own prevent, are so many, and make such deep Impressions upon the Soul, that should we, at our leaving this World, take a true *Estimate* of all the *common* Events that have happened to us in it, there are very few of us who, upon a just balance, would find *the Good* to exceed *the Evil*; the Truth of which Reflection needs no Proof, because it is matter of general observation and complaint.

If we propose to be happy any other way than what *Religion* prescribes, we shall certainly create to our selves much more trouble than what we were by *Nature* exposed to, or

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what we are otherwise like to receive from our *Brethren*. This is also an Observation confirm'd by plenty and variety of Examples; Nothing that happens in Life being more notorious than the particular Calamities which *the Sins* of Men bring upon them, and which are the natural Effects and Consequences of all *vicious* Desires and Enjoyments.

And, as a large Share of human Misery is peculiarly owing to *Vice*, so hath *Virtue* also its proper Troubles and Afflictions belonging to it: For, such is the present condition of our Souls, with relation to the influence of the *Body*, and the impressions of *Education* upon them, that virtuous Dispositions are not easily acquired. It costs us a great deal of pains and trouble to form right Judgments of things; and a great deal more to rid our Minds of such Errors and Prejudices as had taken deep root there, and had been long used to the Soil, before our Reason was capable, either of preventing, or removing them. And afterwards, when *Reason* has taken its proper place, and exerts its due authority, we cannot, without some struggle and reluctance, obey its commands: Be our Convictions never so strong, our *Inclinations to Sense* will be always putting in their Claim to be heard; and

and they cannot always be contradicted, without great uneasiness. And should we be able to govern our own Inclinations, we shall still find it hard to bear up against *Example* and *Custom*; and at last, whatever Resolution we put on, we shall be often disturbed in our course, and meet with many a rude shock from Men of contrary Principles and Designs.

WHAT is there then that can countervail all these Troubles and Afflictions, arising from *Nature*, *Society*, *Virtue*, and *Vice*? For every Man, almost, has his share of all these, more or less. He that hath attained to the Art of virtuous living, hath the fairest Title to Happiness, and commonly the largest possession too; but all the natural advantages that he receives from his Conduct, together with the pleasing consciousness of his own attainments, tho' they may outweigh any other kind of Happiness that Man is capable of here, yet will never prove an Equivalent for all the pains, troubles, and afflictions which, according to the *common* course of this World, must fall to his share: So that the best, and most virtuous Men upon Earth, when they come, at the close of Life, to make up the Account of what they have enjoyed, and suffered, will have no just ground to say, upon

the whole matter, that they have been happy; and it will many times be so ordered, that they shall be of all Men the most miserable.

BUT, let us suppose our selves as happy in every respect as this World can make us; let us imagine our selves placed in such an advantageous Post, that no pain or trouble can reach us, no joy or pleasure pass by us; yet even here *Security* and *Continuance* will still be wanting; and we cannot think of these Defects in our State, without losing the relish of every thing else that we enjoy. Nay, the greater the Happiness is that we are possess'd of, the more desirous shall we be, to be assured of its continuing always the same; and the more painful will our fears and apprehensions be of losing it. And, since we cannot possibly have these *Desires* of our Souls answered, nor these *Fears* removed, while all our *Hopes* are confin'd within the narrow bounds of this short and uncertain Life, we can never be truly and compleatly happy, but in some future State, which shall be *endless*, and *unchangeable*. From whence it plainly follows, that, if there be no other Life to come, we live here to no purpose; because there is no true Happiness belongs to Man in this Life,
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but what the certain prospect of *future Bliss* affords ; and there is *no other End* imaginable besides *Happiness*, worth our living for.

A N D thus we may truly and surely argue, because we are so well acquainted with our own frame and constitution, and with all the circumstances of our condition in this World, as to know, that, if there be nothing to be expected after our departure hence, we have just reason to complain, that we entered into Life at all ; that we had any prospect of what is agreeable to our Nature, any taste of what is good for Man given us ; since we do not only receive no suitable fruit of all our Labours here, but are compassed about with Pains and Sorrows, without any hopes of their ever ending in Satisfaction.

W H A T were the Ends of Providence in the other parts of the Creation, by the imperfect knowledge we have of them, we are not able to determine ; and therefore we cannot, as profane Reasoners do, affirm, that some of them are *of no use* ; and, that others are *irregularly and unskilfully put together* : But this we are sure of, that, whatever Purposes the rest of God's creatures were designed for, they are none of them capable of complaining that they were *ill contrived*, or *made in vain*, besides

sides *Man*. Can *the Clay* say to him that *fashioned it*, *Why hast thou made me thus?* or can *Vessels of Dishonour* murmur and repine, because they were not *made for Honour*? No certainly! no questions or complaints of this kind can come from any Order or Degree of Beings known to us within the whole compass of the Universe, but from the poor unhappy Race of Mankind. And therefore it cannot possibly be believed, or conceived, that God would put it into our power to expostulate with him, for having made and fashioned us after such a manner, and not find a way to satisfy all our Objections; or that he should not be able to justify his Providence to every Being, that is in a condition to find fault, either with his Works, or his Appointments.

III. BUT the *vanity* and *absurdity* of *human Nature*, without the consideration of a *future State*, will farther appear, by observing, that all the *common Judgments of Mankind*, relating to their *being* and *conduct* in this World, which have hitherto been esteemed *unquestionable*, if there be *no future State of rewards and punishments*, must be pronounced *false*.

WHETHER there be any *other State* hereafter, or no, we are sure of our *present Being*. And by the same Experience are we convinced, that we depend very much upon our own care and foresight for the continuance, ease, and comfort of our Life while we do live; for we are not governed and directed by *natural instincts*, or irresistibly determin'd by an *overruling Providence*, as other Creatures are, who all go the nearest and surest way to their several *ends*, without having any *prospect* of them; and make use of the most proper *means* of obtaining what is necessary for them, without knowing what it is to *choose*. But we have a Principle within us, called *Reason*, by which we ourselves *judge* what End is most proper for us to pursue, and which is the likeliest and best way of succeeding in our pursuit.

THE *general End of Man* is certainly *Happiness*, or the *actual enjoyment of perfect Ease and Pleasure*. This is what all Men are by *Nature* disposed to aim at; and which their *Reason*, when duly exercised, presents to their view, and powerfully recommends to them. But, as we have seen before, the greatest part of Mankind, either thro' necessity, ignorance, or despair, take up with lesser degrees of Happiness, and a lower state of being,

ing, than what they are naturally capable of procuring for themselves; and those that carry their Designs as far as their prospect of good reaches, always find themselves baffled and defeated in their expectations.

SINCE therefore *perfect Happiness*, neither is nor can be enjoyed in *this Life*, the first Consequence which this Reflection suggests to us, seems to be, that we ought to expect, and search for it *in another*. But, if there be *no other State* to be expected, then it immediately follows, that we ought to make the *best of this*. And surely we cannot be disappointed here too; tho' we cannot arrive at perfect Happiness, yet 'tis reasonable to believe, that we should be able to make some advances toward it; or at least, that we should not conspire to make our Condition worse than 'tis in itself. But, supposing *private Men* may be mistaken in their aims, as 'tis plain they often are, we shall think it just to conclude, that the *publick Reason of Mankind*, must be a true guide; that *general Principles* will hold good; and, that we cannot *all* follow one another constantly in a false track: And yet, upon a careful examination of things, it will be found, that, if we lay aside the consideration of *another Life*, the common Notions,

tions, upon which Men have always acted, and the settled measures of human Conduct, which have always obtained in the World, and which seem to be the immediate dictates of our Nature, are all entirely wrong; as I shall plainly shew from a few notorious Instances.

NOW 'tis certain, that these are look'd upon as uncontested Principles in Life, *viz.* that *it is better TO BE, than NOT TO BE*; that *it is more for our real advantage to take REASON for our principal Guide than SENSE*; that *WISDOM excelleth FOLLY, and KNOWLEDGE is more desirable than IGNORANCE*; and, that *it conduces more to the happiness of Mankind, to live in SOCIETY, under GOVERNMENT and LAW, than to live wild, in a pure state of Nature*. These, I say, have always pass'd for unquestionable Truths; and in all places, and all ages, the best, and wisest of Men (as they have ever been esteemed) have been influenced by them accordingly: And yet, as the World is now ordered, if there be *no future appointments for Man*, these Principles are all false; and it would be much better for Mankind, to take quite other measures than they now do; as will evidently appear

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from a distinct consideration of each Principle by it self.

1. TO begin with the first: Every Man, whatever his Condition be, seems to be fond of *Life*, and to rejoice in his *Being*. This he takes care to cover, and secure from all manner of Insults, which threaten him from without, and from all Disorders that may arise within his own Constitution. And such a mighty Blessing do we account it *to live*, that we endeavour all we can *to multiply our being*, and *to continue our race* upon the Earth. Private Men glory in their *numerous Issue*; and the grandeur and interest of Nations are made to consist in *the number of their People*. And the same Care and Concern that we all have for *our own Lives*, we extend also to *those of our Posterity*: But, very false and absurd are all these notions and designs, if there be *no other World* but this. For, were it possible for us, before we set out upon the short pilgrimage of Life, to view all the stages through which we were to pass, and to be fully informed of all the adventures we were to meet with in our way, which of us would choose to endure so much, and enjoy so little, without any other prospect, but that of returning to the same state from whence we came?

came ? How few are there to be found of those who have gone thro' half their Journey, that would be willing to travel over the same road again ? And if, in the vigour of our age, we look back upon what is past, without taking any pleasure therein ; what joy or satisfaction can it afford us to look forward, when our *Days are like a shadow that declineth* ; when the *appetites and desires* of Man begin to *fail* ; when all his faculties are decaying, and the whole frame of his being is mouldring away ?

AND indeed, let us take Man in what light or what posture we will, we shall soon perceive, that he hath no great reason to be pleased with his *being* : For, whatever time of Life it be with him, and whatever condition he is in, he is seldom or never satisfied with what *he is*, but is always desiring and striving to be somewhat that *he is not* at present. The greatest part of Mankind, in all Ages, are placed in such circumstances as fall very much below the common notion of *worldly Happiness* ; and these are always hoping and endeavouring to mend their condition, and always die before they have compassed it. And, of those who abound in the good things of this World, there are very few that are

contented with their Portion, and enjoy quietly what is provided for them: But, as they are capable of forming to themselves notions of much *greater Happiness* than they have yet experienced, or indeed, than 'tis possible for them to attain to; so are they commonly imploy'd in such pursuits after it, as Death only can convince them are fruitless and vain. And, in short, thus it fares with Mankind in general; we are continually deliver'd over from hope to hope, and from one vain expectation to another: Were but this Evil removed, were but this Difficulty conquered, then we should be happy; but still, as these go off, new Evils, and new Difficulties immediately arise. Could we but reach the top of yonder Hill, we should touch the Sky; but, as we advance toward it, we find the Sky at the same distance from us as before. As soon as this River is all run by us, we shall get over into pleasant Vales and Meadows, but let us wait never so long, the River still keeps his course. Such are the common cheats and impositions that we put upon our selves, in order to make the burden of Life sit easy upon us; and thus Life slides away from us, before we are resolv'd where to pitch our tents; so that very few are able to say, in any part
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of their Journey, *It is good for us to be here*; and none of us can think, at our going out of the World, that it was worth our while to come into it.

WHERE is then the advantage of *living*? or what hath our *being* profited us, when the *Happiness* for which we were made, and which is the constant Object of all our wishes and endeavours, is either never found, or never enjoy'd; so that we may all say of human Happiness in general, what *Solomon* said of the covetous Man's Wealth, *What good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of it with their Eyes*?

AND if none of us, that *already live*, have any reason to value Life, or to be pleased with our Existence; why do we go on to stock the World with *new Inhabitants*, when the fuller it is, the fewer opportunities shall we all have of being happy, and the more likely shall we be to oppress and devour one another? The *rich and mighty*, who have the largest share of the World, as it is, are commonly the least contented with their lot of any men whatever; on the contrary, they make it their whole study and business to *join house to house, and to lay field to field, till there be no place*. The *Kings and Princes* of the Nations, who bear

bear the chief rule over the Children of Men, are generally endeavouring to extend their Dominions, and encrease their Power, by destroying their Brethren, *that they may be placed alone in the Earth.* And those, who are straitned by the encroachments, and crush'd by the tyranny of these invaders, are constantly disposed to seek their own safety and enlargement, by the same ruinous methods of Rapine and Spoil, War and Desolation. And what other reason can be given of this unhappy Constitution of human affairs, but that the number of men upon the earth is so great, that they have not all room enough to live at their ease, and to provide for their own Happiness, as they think fit, without jostling and disturbing one another? The best way therefore to consult the *general Happiness of Mankind*, would be, that the Rulers of every Kingdom and Country in the World, should do, as *Herod* did formerly at *Bethlehem*, *send forth and slay all the young Children that are therein*; and, that it should be made a standing Law over the face of the whole Earth, that all, which shall hereafter be born, should be immediately delivered from the Cradle to the Grave; for, by this means it would come to pass, that all, who have any relish of Life, would

would be enabled to live as comfortably as they could expect to do *at present*, because they would then be sure that their condition would be always improving: And they could have no care or anxiety *for the future*, because they would have none but themselves to provide for. Then the certain prospect which every Man would have of enlarging his possessions and enjoyments, without injuring, or intrenching upon any of his Neighbours, would make all Men easier and kinder to one another. And then would it be more desirable for us all to cherish Life, and to make our stay here as long as we could; when every Man had the same glorious Hopes before him, that the greatest Conquerors ever entertained, *viz.* either to divide the World with a few, or to get it all to himself. But the truest and most glorious good, that might be brought about this way, would be, that in a short time there would be an end put to the *most ridiculous*, and *the worst contrived* Race of beings that ever appeared in Nature; and that all their *Vanity, Folly, and Misery* would perish with them.

BUT this, we must own, is an extravagant and impracticable Scheme; For *the desire of Life, affection to Children, and concern for*
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Posterity, are Passions too strong to be mastered; and, let the World be never so ill ordered and disposed, every body is resolved to stay as long as he can in it, and to *leave his substance to others*, whether he have any farther Views for himself or not.

1. SUPPOSING therefore that there is *no other Life*, and we must live here in the manner we do; what must we do next, in order to make the most advantage we can of *this state*? Must we take *Reason* for our *Guide*? or, shall we deliver our selves up to the conduct of our *Senses*? Shall we raise and improve the faculties of our Minds, and look out for *spiritual* satisfactions? or, Shall we keep our Understandings low, and suffer our Minds to be wholly imploy'd about *earthly* and *carnal* objects? Great and honourable things, I know, have been said of *human Reason*, and a mighty privilege it is generally esteemed to be a *rational Being*: But if there be *no World to come*; if we have no *better Country to desire* or *seek for*, than this; our *Reason* will be of very little use to us here: For, if we have all of us *our portion in this Life*, we shall then have nothing else to do, but to take care of our *Bodies*, and to *make provision for the Flesh*, either to supply the necessities, or
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to fulfil the lusts thereof. Our Souls will then have no distinct Interest of their own to pursue ; and it will not be worth our while to cultivate and improve our *Reason*, only in order to minister to the *Animal Life*. *What shall we eat ? What shall we drink ? And wherewithal shall we be cloathed ?* This will be the only care and concern of the bulk of Mankind ; and those who have *Goods* already laid up for them, have no other Directions to give their Souls, but to *take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. And what great need is there of exercising our noble faculties of *thinking, reflecting, and reasoning*, for all this ? *Nature* alone is sufficient to excite us to procure what is necessary, and to enjoy what is proper for us ; and all the sagacity and contrivance requisite for these Ends, are within every Man's reach : They are common Talents, which grow up with us, without much care and trouble to improve them ; and when advanced to the height, fall very short of the *natural instinct* of other Creatures : For neither are *we* capable of providing so well for our subsistence, as *they* do for their own ; nor are *our* sensual satisfactions as true, and perfect, as *theirs* are. *Reason*, I confess, hath endeavoured to make up

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these Defects, but most commonly to no purpose ; for, generally speaking, all the Projects and Devices that Men have conceived, for bettering their worldly condition, either by heaping and amassing together more than *Nature* requires, or by procuring such things as have no relation at all to *the welfare of the Body*, give them a great deal of unnecessary trouble and disquiet, while they are carrying on, and always end in disappointment at the last. And the same ill success do they meet with, who make use of their *Reason and Understanding* to heighten the enjoyments of *Sense* ; for, instead of being regular and temperate in their Pleasures, as *Nature* directs, and as they commonly are who obey the calls and restraints of their natural Appetites, without ever reasoning upon them ; their way is, to abandon themselves to such an irregular and extravagant Sensuality, as palls and deadens the Desires they intended to gratify ; brings upon them more Pains and Calamities than ever they were born to ; and weakens and impairs the whole frame and constitution of their Beings.

IF therefore we have no other Life to trust to, but this ; neither hath *Reason* any other conclusion but this to make for us ; *Let us eat,*

eat, and drink, and rise up to play ; let us enjoy the good things that are present, for to-morrow we die : But if we live till to-morrow, to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Let all other Thoughts and Reflections be banished from our Minds; let not the remembrance of things past, or the apprehension of things to come, disturb our present rest : Let no specious Pretences to Knowledge carry us out of the common road of Life, in quest of some distant and uncertain good that does not belong to us; and let us, as much as it is possible, forget that we are *rational Beings*.

'TIS true indeed, we shall then be *counted as Beasts*, and *reputed vile in the sight* of those who value themselves upon the *dignity and perfection* of their *reasonable Nature*. But, what if we are ? If *all are of the Dust*, and *all turn to Dust again*; what *preheminance hath a Man above a Beast*? And, if *as the one dieth, so dieth the other*, why should not the Life of the one be also like the Life of the other? If we *all go to one place*, why should we not all go the same way to it? And why should not the same Provisions and Accommodations serve us, while we are journeying thither ?

THUS may we justly argue, if we think fit to make use of our *Reason* at all. And such, we see in fact, is the common estate of *the Sons of Men*; in nothing better than that of *the Beasts*, and in many respects much worse. But this, say the wise and learned part of Mankind, is owing purely to their *Ignorance*: For, were their Understandings enlightened with proper Knowledge, and their REASON *duly exercised, to discern between Good and Evil*, true and false; they would despise such a poor wretched Life of *Sense*, as now they lead; they would turn their Thoughts to nobler and worthier pursuits; and they would have a juster relish of *rational* satisfactions. And so indeed they would, did they carry their views into a higher and more *spiritual* State than this: But, without such a prospect, they had much better continue in their Ignorance still; they had better *walk on still in darkness*, than be constantly dazzled and deceived by false lights, which play about them for a while, and then vanish for ever. For, if there be no other *Wisdom*, or *Knowledge*, but of *this World*; we shall then have just reason to say, *It is good that the Soul be without Knowledge*: And that which Solomon, who knew the most of any Man living, hath assured

assured us of, we our selves shall find to be true ; that *in much wisdom is much grief*; and, that *he which increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*.

3. THE truth of this reflexion, which contradicts another of those *established Principles* before mention'd, that *Knowledge and Wisdom are always to be preferred to Ignorance and Folly*, will plainly appear, if we consider the several branches of *human Knowledge*, to our progress in which we owe the title of *learned*, and to the use we make of them, for our own benefit, the character of *wise Men*.

NOW, the first and most necessary part of *Wisdom* (as it is commonly esteemed) is, *to know our selves*: But what advantage can we reap from this kind of Knowledge, when, after the utmost search that we have been able to make, we shall be forced to add to whatever other Truths we have learn'd, this one certain conclusion, that *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*? What pleasure could we take in searching into *the History* of all the irregular Passions, wild Designs, false Hopes, groundless Fears, and unaccountable Disappointments of Mankind? Or, should we enquire into *the present times*, and find that *these are no better than the former*; and that we

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our selves are made just like our Fore-fathers; and are subject to all the same dispositions and events; what ease, or entertainment, would such a discovery afford us? And what comfort would it be to us, after all our enquiries, to know, and to be assured, that we have no other Portion or Inheritance but this; that *the thing which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing to be expected for ever?*

IF, in the next place, we turn our thoughts to the contemplation of God, and endeavour by searching to find out the Almighty; what shall we get by all the discoveries we are able to make? If God be not our Maker, our Father, and our Redeemer; if all that we can learn of him be only this, that he rejoiceth in his own Perfection and Happiness, without having any regard or concern for us, what a terrible aggravation must this be to the present sense we have of our misery, to know, that *at the right hand of God there are rivers of pleasure for evermore; but that we shall never be admitted to taste the least drop of them; and, that to him belongeth power, whereby he is able to exalt us to a better State; and yet, that he will never reach out*
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his hand, to *lift us out of the mire and clay*? But, if God be the *Author of our beings*; if he made and fashioned us, and gave us this *Soul*; and it is he also that will bring us *unto Dust again, from whence we shall not return*; our knowing this, will only furnish us with matter of expostulation and complaint: We shall then be disposed to *turn our spirit against God*, and say, *Wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain*? Then will every one have reason to cry out, as Job did, *Wherefore was light given to him that is in misery, whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in*? *Why died I not from the Womb*? Oh, *that I had given up the ghost, and no Eye had seen me*! Then should I have been as though I had not been: I should have been still, and been quiet; I should have slept, then had I been at rest. These are the Thoughts which anguish and despair will be apt to suggest to us: But, if such reflections are unreasonable and unjust; if it be inconsistent with the *Wisdom of God*, to create any thing in vain, and with his *Goodness*, to give Trouble and Affliction, without any hope of recompense; then we must conclude, that *there is no God*; or, at least, that *he is not the Creator and Governour of the World*; because there are
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no tokens, either of his Wisdom, or Goodness, to be found in *Man*. And therefore *Man* could not derive his Being from God. And, if *Man*, who is, in many respects, the most perfect of all the Beings we are acquainted with, be not the Workmanship of God, it is not reasonable to suppose that *any thing else* is.

SUCH will be the result of all our thoughts concerning *God*, upon a supposition that there is no future State of Life appointed for Men. And what relief would it be to us, in this case, to look abroad and survey *the World without us*? To what purpose should we then consider the Heavens, and the Earth, and all the glorious Beings that are therein? And of what use will it be to us, to examine into the wonderful contrivance and disposition of the Universe, when the utmost Knowledge we can gain by all our search and study, will be reduced at last to this one melancholy Truth; that there is nothing in the whole compass of Nature, either *irregular*, or *miserable*, but *Man*?

HAPPIER therefore, much happier, are they who never trouble themselves to know any thing, either of *God*, or *themselves*, or *other Beings*; but use and enjoy *whatsoever is before*

fore them, without *asking any Question*, either for *Conscience*, or *Curiosity sake*: Who carry on the business of Life in the way they have been taught, and accustomed to, without enquiring after any other; and who go down to the Grave, without ever considering whither they go, or what will be after them.

4. AND, if these observations hold, it will be easy to make good what follows, *viz.* that *if we exclude the considerations of Religion, and a Future State, it would be more for the real advantage and happiness of Mankind, in other respects, to live in a state of pure simple Nature, without Government and Law, than to unite into several Bodies, under civil Constitutions.*

THIS, I am sensible, will appear very strange at first view; because both the *real* and *supposed* advantages of Mens living together in *society*, are so conspicuous, and are thought so necessary to our well-being; especially when the state of rude and savage People is consider'd at the same time; that we cannot imagine our selves capable of any *happiness* or *ease* without them. The vast improvements of Knowledge, the great variety of Arts and Employments, and the many sur-
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prizing Inventions that are made use of for *convenience, pleasure, or defence*, are within every body's notice, who lives in a civilized well-governed Country. And therefore, to affirm, that any People, who want all these things, can be happier than they that enjoy them, must seem at first, to most Persons, a *hard saying*, which they are not able to bear; though, upon farther reflection, and a just comparison of both states, I am apt to believe it will prove very true.

FOR, if we consider Men in a *state of pure Nature*, without any extraordinary Art or Power among them; we shall find, that their *appetites and desires* are *fewer*, and *more regular* than ours; that they aim at nothing beyond the mere *necessaries of Life*; and, that what they account necessary, lies in a very narrow room, and is purchased with very little *labour and care*. *Pride, Envy, and Malice*, are hardly known among them; and when their immediate wants are supplied, they have but few occasions to *quarrel* with one another, because there seldom happens any ground for competition.

'TIS true indeed, they are very *ignorant*; but herein (as it plainly follows from what hath been said upon a former head) consists
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the chief part of their *Happiness* : For by this means they are free from all stinging *Reflections* upon what is *past*, and from all uneasy *apprehensions* of what is *to come*. Their Thoughts are wholly taken up with *the present* ; and, whatever trouble or calamity befall them, they never make it worse than it is, by laying on frightful colours : Neither are they subject to any of those numberless afflictions and torments, which Men, even of the highest condition in the *civilized* part of the World, create to themselves, by *impotent Desires*, *imaginary Fears*, *unnecessary Cares*, *fruitless Sorrows*, and *irregular Ways of living*.

I N what respects then can it be said, that our condition is preferable to theirs ? There are, I confess, in every *Society*, some Persons to be found, who, by living pretty evenly and regularly, according to the dictates of their improved Reason, do not only take greater pleasure and satisfaction in themselves, but, by a right use and application of all the external conveniences of Life, do raise their happiness to a higher degree, than any Man can attain to in a mere *natural State* : But even these Men, if they carry their Thoughts as far as they ought to do, will be very un-

easy under the certain conviction, that they must soon *die*, and cease *to be* and *to be happy* together : And their Souls will be disquieted within them, when they find, that, after all the advancements they have made in Knowledge, they are able to give no better account of themselves. This is such a Reflection, as will puzzle and torment them every time it comes into their Minds : And therefore, in order to have a true relish of those advantages, which they enjoy above their *rude* and *barbarous* Brethren, they must in this point have recourse to the same *Ignorance*, and want of thinking, which saves these poor People from abundance of that pain and uneasiness, which the Thoughts and Imaginations of politer Men are continually raising in them.

BUT there are very few who come so near being happy, as I have now supposed some to be : For, the greatest part of those who are distinguished by the large share they have of the outward *ornaments* and *conveniences of Life*, as well as *capacities* and *opportunities of Pleasure*, are not content with what they have, but are always careful and solicitous for more : They are always distracted with envy and grief to see others better provided ;
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and they continually meet with occasions of jealousy and resentment, from the designs and behaviour of those that fear or envy them : So that, some way or other, they are constantly exposed to such troubles and inconveniences, as Men that want all these extraordinary advantages are perfect strangers to : And therefore, notwithstanding the *outward figure* and *appearance* they make, they are *really* and *truly*, all things considered, *more miserable* than those despised Creatures who live without either *Law*, or *Government*.

AND as to the *poor* and *labouring* part of Mankind, which make the bulk of every Society, they are in no respect easier or better in the condition they are in, than they would be in such a state of Nature as is before described : For they do but just live now ; they have but little more besides the necessities of Life belonging to them ; and it is with continual labour and toil that they eat their bread ; which is never got so *easily*, and is seldom enjoy'd so *securely*, as it is among those People, who appear naked, and destitute of all things ; and yet, having wherewithal to support themselves, are happier than the others, inasmuch as they live *free*, and *without care*, and have no apprehension of *want*, *loss*, or
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oppression; all which, the lesser People of every Nation constantly dread, and almost as constantly endure.

THERE are therefore, even in the best and *most regular Societies*, but a very few, who enjoy the advantages of such constitutions of living, in comparison of those that would be as happy without them. And, when there is a *rude, arbitrary, and unskilful Tyranny* set up, (as this is the case of the far greatest part of the World now under Government) the generality of the People, in all these Countries, are evidently more *miserable* for being *united* together into *Bodies* under *Governors*, than they would be if they *lived wild*, and sought their bread *in desolate places*; as would plainly appear, were the Subjects of every *arbitrary Government* in the World allowed to draw up a faithful representation of all the amazing hardships and miseries they endure.

MUCH more might be offered for confirming the truth of this reflection; as the many *painful and hazardous methods of gain*, the many strange *acts of cruelty and destruction*, and the various sorts of *unnatural vice and depravity*, that have been invented and practised in those places which have had the reputation of being most *civilized* and *polite*,
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and where *Learning* and *Knowledge* have been at the greatest height. But I am well aware of what might be here objected; that to insist upon Proofs of this sort, is to argue against *the common sense of Mankind*: And therefore, all that I shall add farther in maintenance of what I have been now urging, shall be, to shew, that *the common sense of Mankind*, as far as we are capable of learning what it is, or what it would be, if proper trials could be made, will justify all the reasonings before used.

NOW, to prove this point by *Experience*, I am sensible, is a very hard task; because it is very difficult for one Man to enter into the experience of another, especially in matters of pure *taste* and *relish*; as all sorts of *Pleasure* and *Happiness* are. But the following Cases will give us the greatest light we can expect. Should we ask any of the meanest and poorest Members of that much-admired *Constitution* under which we live, whether they would be content to quit that wretched laborious way of living they are here condemned to, and be transported into a *wild, lawless* Country, there to range free and uncontrouled, seeking for food and shelter in the same manner as the ancient Natives do; I am confident we should
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find but very few, who would be willing to make such an exchange; not only because they had been long inured to poverty and hard labour, and were fearful of any new condition, lest it should prove worse than their own; but because they are foolish enough to be pleased with the *Riches, Plenty, and Honour* of the Nation they belong to, though they have not the least share themselves in any of them.

AND should the like Offer be made to any of those *Savages*, that are found in several remote parts of the Earth, to change *Country and Condition* with our poor People; it would be impossible, I believe, to persuade them to bear all the *labour and confinement* that would accompany such a change. Nay farther, there is very good ground to conclude, from Experiments already made, that they would prefer their own way of living to the easiest and best condition we could place them in. Hitherto then *experience*, as far as we can judge, seems to favour equally both sides of the Question. The only way therefore to try this matter fairly and thoroughly, is, to ask the *rich, the learned, and the great*, whose Circumstances are easy, and whose Understandings are improved, which of the two states of
Life

Life before-mention'd they should be disposed to choose, were they under a necessity of choosing one of them. And here I will not put the hardest case possible, though it takes in great numbers, Whether they had rather spend their whole Lives in *Mines, Gallies, or Prisons*; but, what is common to the greatest part of every Society, Whether they had rather earn a poor scanty proportion of bad food and raiment, by constant hard labour, and bear all the other usual Inconveniences and Hardships which attend a necessitous Family, than live in such a *wild state of Nature*, as is here recommended to their choice. Now, if there are very few, or none, of such a character, in any Society, who would not make this latter state their option; then is it reasonable to conclude, that this is the more eligible condition of the two, the *wisest* and *happiest* part of Mankind being judges: And very few certainly there are, who would not thus choose for themselves, had they nothing else but the *ease and happiness of this Life* to determine them.

BUT, on the other side, if these things be considered with regard to *Religion*; it must be allowed, that without *Society, Law, and Government*, there can be but little or no Re-

ligion any where in the World; because, without these helps, Man is capable of but very little *Knowledge*. By these means therefore is the knowledge of *God* and *Providence*, of the *Rules and Duties of Life*, and of *future Rewards and Punishments*, preserved, propagated, and enforced among us. And *Government* is, in the nature of it, sufficient for this end, though not for *the present Happiness of Mankind*; as hath been already shewn: It is, I say, sufficient for this end; because, if due care were taken by *Governours* and *Magistrates*, to instruct their People, every body, of what condition soever he be in any Society, whether *rich* or *poor*, *base* or *honourable*, is capable of knowing and doing his Duty to God, so far as he is not wanting to himself; and thereby of obtaining that *Happiness in another World*, which every Man seeks for here in vain.

AND upon this view likewise all the *other Principles* before laid down will prove to be *true and just*. For, if *this World* be a *passage to a better*, then will it be worth our while to go through it, whatever Troubles and Inconvenience we meet with in our way. If we have a *Kingdom prepared for us*, which *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit*, then will it
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belove us to take more care of our *Souls* than of our *Bodies*, and to prefer *spiritual* things to *carnal*. And then also will *Knowledge be pleasant to the Soul*, and we shall love *Light rather than Darkness*; when the more we know, and the farther we look, the larger will be the prospect, and the stronger the assurance we shall have of that *heavenly Bliss*, which is *the Crown of Life*, and *the recompense of the reward* promised by God, to *them that diligently seek him*.

THUS doth it evidently appear, from all the variety of proof, which *the being and attributes of God, the nature and condition of Man, and the present state of things in this World* can furnish us with, that *the true End of Man, and the only reason of human Life assignable, is to serve God here, in order to enjoy the Happiness he hath prepared for us in a future State*. Let us now look back, and consider the whole Argument together. Can any of us suppose, that Man was made at all adventures, *without any End or Design*? Can we be so absurd as to believe, that we were framed and fashioned *without any Knowledge or Wisdom* in our *Maker or Cause* of our Being; and yet, that *we should have Knowledge*

ledge and Wisdom enough to discern this, and to find fault with our being put so ill together? Were this the true case, that Man was *made by chance*; then it follows, that he ought to *live at random*. If no *Wisdom* or *Reason* were employed *in the composition of his Being*, none are necessary *for the government and direction of his Life*; but, as he was made at first, so ought he to be conducted all the while he continues in being; that is, by *external impressions* and *occasions*, without any care or foresight of his own, and without pointing and directing his actions to any end whatever. But this is such a flat contradiction to common sense and experience, that even those who ascribed the *original of Mankind*, as well as every thing else, to *Chance*, have thought it necessary however that *Man* should *live according to Reason*. In consequence of which opinion they have acquainted us with what seemed to them the truest and most proper *end of human Life*; they have given us likewise a great many *Rules* and *Directions* for the surer attainment of it; and have very gravely recommended *Wisdom* and *Virtue* to our choice. But how inconsistent are these things with their main Principle? For if, in the present state of our Being, we
cannot

cannot help owning, that *Wisdom* belongs to Man; and, that there is some certain *End* which he ought to aim at in all his actions; much more reason is there to believe, that he was formed and fashioned at first by some *wise* and powerful *Author*, *wonderful in counsel*, and *excellent in working*; there being nothing in the conduct and regulation of human Life, which is any ways answerable to the Skill that was shewn in making Man. Nay, so much plainer, and more undeniable, are the tokens and indications of *Wisdom*, in the *frame and composition of Man*, than in the *present state and condition of his living* in the World, that some of those, who, from the *wonderful contrivance of the World*, and particularly of *humane Nature*, were forced to conclude, that *there was a God, who created all things*. Afterwards, when they observed how *unequally* the affairs of Mankind were managed, how much *folly*, and *vanity*, and *misery* they were all subject to, and how little *profit a Man hath of all his Labour*, and *Knowledge*, and *Virtue*, *wherein he hath shewed himself wise under the Sun*; even these very Men, I say, were, from this only consideration, tempted to deny their Maker, chusing rather to believe, that *Time and Chance*
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happeneth to all things, than that God should make man in wisdom, and yet suffer him to *spend all the days of his vain Life as a shadow*, without ever *knowing what is good for him*. And herein have they justly reasoned, were all our hopes and expectations confined to *this Life*. But those who have consider'd the nature and circumstances of Man more exactly, have acknowledg'd the Wisdom of the whole Dispensation: For, as from *the perfection of Man's Being*, they have been obliged to own, that *God was his Creator*; so, from *the imperfections of his present State*, they have been necessarily led to infer, that God hath appointed some other and better state of Life for him.

AND indeed there is no middle way to take in our reasonings upon this subject; for *every thing concerning Man*, must either *happen by chance*, or *be wisely ordered*. If Man was *made by chance*, it is ridiculous to talk to him of *the ends of Life*; and to prescribe *rules and measures* for his conduct. *Thinking*, and *reasoning*, and *chusing*, are actions that do not belong to him: And his whole Life must then be supposed to be one continued dream, where a variety of vain images and useless agitations, succeed one another,
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till the Sleep of Death closes the Scene. But if there be any *Wisdom* discernible in the *frame of Man*, then was he certainly *made by God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift* : And if he was made by God, he must be made for some *wise end* and purpose ; and that end must needs be such as is *agreeable to his Nature*, and such as is *attainable*, or else he could not be *wisely made* ; nor consequently could *God* be the *Author of his Being*. Since therefore 'tis manifest that Man, with all his Knowledge and Understanding, is *not capable of obtaining that End* which is proper and agreeable to his nature *in this Life*, it necessarily follows, that *God hath appointed some other state for him* : For it is impossible to conceive, either that *God* should have *no End in making Man* ; or, that he should *make him utterly incapable of obtaining that End for which he designed him* : That he should give him capacities that could never be filled, and inclinations and desires that could never be answered ; that he should deceive him with false hopes, amuse him with the prospect of *good things* at a distance which he could never reach ; and suffer him all the days of his Life to *labour for the Wind*, and to *weary himself for very Vanity*. It is not
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in reason to be thought or imagined, that God should lead all Mankind (as the Scriptures tell us he did *Moses*) through a Wilderness, and then carry them to the top of a high Mountain, and shew them a *Land flowing with milk and honey*, and not permit any of them to set their Foot thereon, or to taste of the Fruits of it: This, I say, is no way reconcileable to any notions we have of God; unless it be allow'd at the same time, that there is some *recompense of reward* provided for Men in another World; that there is a *Heavenly Canaan* preferable to that on Earth, and a *Jerusalem above*, which is far more glorious than that below.

THESE things then being laid together, it is very evident, either that *there is a future State*; or else, that *we were neither made by God, nor made to any end or purpose at all*. And, if *Reason* be permitted to have any weight or authority in determining this point, there can be no doubt which is the *most reasonable* conclusion of the two.

FOR, how can we go about to persuade our selves by *rational* arguments, that our *Reason is of no use or advantage to us*? How can we suppose, that all Men should be constantly employed in enquiring and searching
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for what none of them can find? And what can induce us to believe, that *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* should carry us farther off of the chief end of Life, than *Ignorance* and *Folly*; that the best state a Man can be in, is to know nothing of himself; and, that all the improvements and perfections of Mind he is capable of, will only add *vexation* to *vanity*? And yet, if there be *no future State*, these are Consequences not to be avoided; as hath been shewn more at large *throughout* this discourse,

BUT, on the contrary, upon a *future prospect*, how do all the difficulties of *divine Providence* and *human Nature* clear up before us? If there be *another World*, in which Men shall *live for ever*, and where they shall be for ever *happy*, or *miserable*, according as they order their behaviour *here*; then is it easy to account for all the seemingly unequal and irregular dispensations of *this State*: For then it will appear, that Man was *made for an End* that is worthy of him, and every way *suitable to his nature*; such as will answer all his desires, requite all his pains, and exceed all his hopes. Then will the *way of Life* lie plain before our face, and we shall be deliver'd from all that *uncertainty* and *distraktion* which the various Proposals of our own Reason, and

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the different Sentiments of other Men, are now continually raising in us: *Knowledge* and *Virtue* will then approve themselves to our Minds, as real and necessary Perfections: We shall be sensible of the *pre-eminence of the Soul above the Body*; and the dignity of our whole Nature will be vindicated. When the troubles and calamities of this World lay hold of us, and even when *tribulation ariseth for Religion and Virtue's sake*, we shall not be offended; because we know that our *light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*. We shall think it no hardship to deny our selves *the pleasures of Sin for a season*, when we are sure that *the joy which is set before us*, shall continue for ever: Neither shall we look upon this as any objection to Providence, that, upon some occasions, the *wicked should in their Life-time receive good things*, and the *righteous evil things*; when we know that *in the Life to come these shall be comforted, and the other tormented*. In short, whatever state or condition we are in, or however the affairs of the World are ordered, the comfortable assurance of a *future State* will fix and establish our Minds, and give us *Peace and Rest* on every side.

IT is therefore of the utmost consequence to us, to be satisfied whether there be any *other World* or not: For, upon the determination of this point depend all the issues of human Life. All our notions and sentiments of things will be different, and all our actions will run in a different chanel, according as we *believe*, or *disbelieve*, a *future State*.

IF we are persuaded that there is no such thing, then it matters not how we came hither, nor which way the course of this World is ordered, nor what manner of Life we chuse, or are thrown upon: For, in this case, all the colours of *Good* and *Evil* will be confounded, and the marks of *Truth* utterly defaced: It will be all darkness about us, and we must grope out our way as well as we can. What inclinations we feel in our selves, those we must gratify; and the Passions that prevail most, must be suffered to reign; and whatever appears to be for our present *convenience*, *pleasure*, or *interest*, that we must pursue, till we meet with some rub in our way which turns us into another track. Upon this supposition every Man's conduct will be as wise as another's; and, whether a Man change his way of living, or continue the same course, it will be all one: We have but

a small spot of ground to cultivate, and every Man may sow what he likes best in his own Garden; for the care and toil will be much alike to all, and every one will at last receive the same fruit of his Labours.

BUT, on the contrary, if we are fully convinced that God hath made us, and design'd us for another Life, *what manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness!* Then will *Religion* be our whole business and imployment, and all our Passions and Affections must yield to *the love of God*: Then will there be *one thing necessary*, and all our care and concern must be spent in the pursuit; there will be *one thing of great price*, and we must sell all to purchase it. We must then look upon our selves as *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* here, who *seek a better Country*, where the state and condition of our being will be in all respects very different from what it now is, or can be, and where we shall dwell for evermore; and consequently we must make it the chief end and design of *this Life*, to fit and prepare ourselves for a better; constantly *reaching forth unto the things that are before*, without being let or hindred by any of the things of *this World*, the fashion of which *passeth away, and the lust thereof*.

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ALL that remains then to be considered by us, is, Whether it be more *reasonable* and *comfortable* to believe that we are *mortal*, or *immortal* Creatures; and which is the wisest and most becoming choice a Man can make, to desire and endeavour to be *like God*, or to be content with being *like the Beasts that perish*.

A N D who is there among us, so fond of *mortality*, as to chuse the latter part? Which of all the Children of Men can, with the full consent of his mind, desire to *perish for ever*, and be pleased with the thought that he shall *go down to the Grave, and come up no more*? Can the *rich* Man be willing to quit all his Goods and Possessions in this World, without having laid up for himself any Treasure in another? Can the *wise*, the *mighty*, and the *honourable* Men of the Earth, who have been endeavouring, all their Life-time, to stretch themselves beyond the common measure of humanity, be content to draw in their wings, contract their figure, and be gather'd to the common heap of Dust, without any hopes of being ever distinguished again? Can the *sensual*, and *voluptuous*, whose end is Pleasure, wish and desire to be in such a state, where they are sure to lose all their taste and relish
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of every thing that is good and delightful ? Nay, Is there any Man upon Earth so *miserable*, as freely to resign his whole being, and all his interest in it for ever, while he hath any likelihood or possibility left of being compleatly and eternally happy after this short Life is ended ? No certainly ; it is impossible for any Men whatsoever, to find the least *comfort or satisfaction* in believing that they shall *perish altogether* ; but such only as are at the same time convinced in their own breasts that, if there be *another Life*, *Misery* will be their portion in it : Which is so far from being an argument against a *future State*, that nothing can confirm us more in the belief of it. For, if the *wicked* cannot help *condemning themselves* ; if they cannot but think it reasonable that they *ought to be punished*, (as 'tis evident they do, when they are afraid of a *Judgment to come*) it must be likewise as reasonable to believe, that they shall receive what they deserve ; and, that *the Sentence* which they have past upon themselves, being *just*, shall some time or other *be executed* upon them. And surely there is as much ground to *hope* for a *future State*, as there is to *fear* it : If there be a *God that judgeth in the earth*, verily there is a *reward for the righteous* ; and
if

if there *may be a Hell*, there *must be a Heaven*.

LET us not therefore hearken to those vain and malicious deceivers, who, because they despair of having *any part in the Book of Life*, reproach their *Maker*, disgrace their *own Nature*, and do what in them lies to *destroy the Hope of Man*, and to involve their Brethren in the same state of *Perdition* with themselves.

LET us rather hearken to the Voice of *Reason* within us ; whereby we are assured that we are *the workmanship of a wise Being*, who ordereth every thing to some proper end and purpose. Let us consider *the dignity of our Nature*, and the pre-eminence of Man above all the other ranks and orders of living Creatures upon Earth ; and let us reverence our selves accordingly, and make a due use of the privileges we enjoy, in full hope and expectation of being advanced to a *higher condition* hereafter.

LET us, to whom are now committed *the Oracles of God* deliver'd to the *Fathers*, remember what is there revealed to them, that we were *created in the image of God*, and were formed and fashioned for *his glory* ; and let us endeavour all we can to preserve that
likeness

likeness wherein we were made, and to answer the *End* of our great Creator.

BUT we, who are called *Christians*, and have plainer Promises, and nobler Hopes to encourage us, than any of the *ancient Fathers* had; we, to whom *Life and Immortality* are not only brought to light through the *Gospel*; but are so *fully*, and in so *lively* and *affecting* a manner set before our face, that there can be no doubt now remaining what our *end* will be, we have certainly all the Obligations in the world to *press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*.

THEREFORE, *My beloved Brethren*, let us be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know*, and are assured, from the united testimony of *Reason and Revelation*, that our labour will not be in vain in the Lord; but that in due season, if we faint not, we shall reap *Everlasting Life*.

AND thus having finished the Proof I intended, and brought it into as narrow a compass as I could, I shall close my Discourse with an address to those, for whose sake I chiefly designed it, *viz. to the Unbelievers*
of

of this Age and Country, whatever other style or denomination they take to themselves, or is bestowed upon them by the World.

YOU are the Persons, whom I earnestly desire to consider and examine what is here advanced; and from whom I expect, that this grand Article *of a future State*, should be either *confirmed*, or *confuted*. In order therefore to debate the matter freely with you, and to bring it to a short and certain issue, give me leave to observe to you, in the first place, how I have treated the subject, and what sort of Proof I have insisted upon.

I HAVE not multiplied Words without cause, or amused you with nice and obscure Reasonings: It is but *one single* Argument I have made use of, to demonstrate this important point, and that *a natural easy* argument, which every Man is a capable judge of; and all the Reflections and Observations brought to support it are immediately taken from *human Nature*, and from *the present state of the World*; which are parts of Knowledge that lie open to every Man, who will either *look into himself*, or *look about him*.

I HAVE not entertained you with a Philosophical Disquisition concerning the *Imma-*
M *teriality*

teriality of our Souls; though this alone hath been thought sufficient, by many learned *Heathens* as well as *Christians*, to establish their *Immortality*. And you yourselves plainly acknowledge the force of the Argument, by labouring all you can to destroy it.

I HAVE not urged *the authority of Men* to you, notwithstanding we have *numbers*, and *antiquity* of our side: I might have pressed you with what all Men of sense and reason, in every dispute where it can be offer'd, lay great stress upon; and that is, *the general consent of Ages and Nations*. I might have instanced, as *Tully* and other great Philosophers have done, in many *ancient* and *universal Customs* that have obtain'd throughout the World, even in some of the most barbarous parts of it, which were plainly founded upon the *belief of a future State*, and *the expectation of Immortality*; but I chose rather to appeal to *your selves* only, and to call upon you to consult your own breasts, and to observe what passes in the World in your own time.

I HAVE purposely declined all the evidence of *Divine Revelation*, because you are pleased to question, whether any Knowledge

can

can be conveyed this way; and are apt to impute every thing that goes under this name or character to *Priestcraft*: Though 'tis evident, from the very nature of the thing, that *Religion* must be older than *Priestcraft*; and all pretences to *Inspiration, Miracles, Spiritual Authority, &c.* do manifestly suppose an antecedent Belief of a *God*, and the Obligations of Mankind to obey him, upon the prospect of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. But, waving all Pleas of this kind, it is *Reason* alone that I have made the judge in this Dispute; even *your own Reason*, that *Idol*, which you have set up in opposition to *God, the giver of this perfect gift*.

A N D now, let me ask you freely what Objections your *Reason* can suggest to you, against the Doctrine of a *Future State*.

SEVERAL Persons have (as we say) *come out of their Graves, and appeared unto many*, and by *shewing themselves alive* again, have given *infallible proofs* of the reality of *another state of Being*: But no Man can have returned from the Grave, to tell you, that *he is no more*; and, that he hath no sense or remembrance of any thing left. You cannot therefore be *sure* that you shall perish utterly

ly, from any information or intelligence of this kind.

WHAT *probable Arguments* then can induce you to *believe* that this will be your fate? What *agreeable Views* or Prospects can dispose you to *hope* for it?

DOES *the Nature of Man* appear to you so perfect, as not to want, or to be capable of, farther improvements? Is *the course of this World* so regularly ordered, that there is nothing to be mended in another? Or, is it inconsistent with the *Majesty, Wisdom, Goodness*, or any other *Attribute of God*, to lengthen out the Being of Man, and to give him more Knowledge and Happiness than he now enjoys? No certainly! there is nothing within the compass of this World that can lead you to conclude, that there never shall be any other.

THE utmost of what can be advanced by the most determined Infidel, is only this: That, notwithstanding all the fair appearances of the truth of a *future State*, 'tis possible, after all, that there *may be none*. And, in order to make out this *may be*, three other very hard suppositions are necessary, *viz.* That 'tis possible *matter may think*; that the Soul, tho' it should

should be *immaterial*, may nevertheless be *mortal*; and, that there may perhaps be no *God*. But 'tis plain, that the two first of these suppositions can signify nothing at all without the third; because, if *there be a God*, all the reasons before urged for a future State will be conclusive, whatever *the nature of the Soul* be.

FOR, if *the Soul* be a *distinct Principle* from the *Body*, there is no doubt but God is able to preserve it in a *separate state* of Being, when the *Body* is dissolved; or he can prepare *another Body* to receive it; or he can re-unite it to *the same*, as he shall think fit. But, supposing what we call the *Soul* be nothing else but *a spark that moves in the heart*, God can keep alive that spark for ever, with the same ease that he first kindled it. If Man be only a *Machine*, a mere piece of *Clockwork*, *God*, who made this Machine, can put it together again, when broke and crumbled into Dust, and set it a going in the same manner as before. If we consider only what *may be*, there is no arguing against *the Almighty*: And if an *Almighty Being* hath any other Attributes, besides *Power*, (as to be sure he hath) from every other Perfection that belongs to him, we may easily conclude what
will

will be, or what it is *reasonable* to expect *should be*. For, if there be any *Knowledge*, or *Wisdom*, in the Most High; if there be any *Justice* or *Goodness* in him that *gave us this Soul*; he must certainly have ordained *another state of Life* for us; or else we shall be forced to say, that a *wise, just, and gracious Being*, of *infinite Power* and *Knowledge*, hath *made all Men in vain*; which (as hath been fully proved in the foregoing Discourse) it is impossible for us to conceive or imagine.

BUT let us suppose farther, that *there is no God*; that is, no such *intelligent Being* as is just before described; and, that nothing else is meant by that word, but what is otherwise styled *Nature*; the same absurd consequence will still return upon us: For no Philosophy will allow, that *Nature* should do any thing *in vain*; and yet, if there be no *future State*, all *the Works of Nature*, however *great, regular, and beautiful* they may seem at present, would then be found to be made *to no purpose*. The structure and disposition of the Heavens, and of the Earth, together with all that variety and order of Beings contained in them, which is now the subject of our admiration, will, upon this supposition, appear to

us more absurd and ridiculous, than if there
 was no *Firmament* yet made, if *the Earth*
was still without form, and void, and darkness
continued upon the face of the Deep. For,
 what greater absurdity can be imagined than
 this, *viz.* that *the Heavens*, and *all the Host*
of them, should be formed and fashioned in
 the manner they are, for the use, contempla-
 tion, and delight of Man, whose *Spirit goeth*
downward to the Earth; that *Lights* should
 be set *in the Firmament of Heaven*, to be for
signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for
years, to poor wretched *Mortals*, only to
 enable them to compute the number of their
 Labours, to measure the length of their Pilgri-
 mage, and to see and behold with their Eyes,
 as well as understand with their Hearts, that
there is no profit under the Sun; and, that
the Earth should be given to the *Children of*
Men, that they might eat of it with sorrow
all the days of their life, and then return to
the Ground, from whence they were taken?
 Had *Babylon*, the *Glory of Kingdoms*, been
 built for no other end, but to be a *habitation*
for Dragons, and a *Court for Owls*; that
wild Beasts of the Desert might lie there,
 that her *Houses* might be full of *doleful Crea-*
tures, and *Satyrs* dance in her pleasant *Pa-*
laces;

laces; all the *strength, beauty, and grandeur* of the place, and all the *art, skill, and power* that were imployed in building this City, would only have served to heighten the *folly* of the author and contriver of such a stupendous Work. And much more ridiculous must all this glorious Fabrick, which we call *the World*, appear to us, should we suppose that the design of the whole contrivance was, that the *Beasts of the field*, and the *Fowls of the air* might range to and fro, and *seek their meat*, and take *their pastime therein*, till they *die and return to their Dust*. And what is Man, that more regard should be had to him in framing the plan of this World, than to any other *moving Creature that hath Life*, if *that which befalleth Man befalleth Beasts*, and *his last end be like theirs*? If the *Heavens* were not made to *declare to us the Glory of God*, and to raise our Thoughts and Desires to *things above*; if God did not *create us in the beginning for his Glory*, and *form us for himself*; and if, *after Worms have destroyed this Body*, we shall not *see our Redeemer stand at the latter Day upon the Earth*, then will it be proper for us to remove this whole Scene of things from our Thoughts, as no way worthy of our Contemplation, and as having less concern

cern and interest in the Heavens, and in the Earth, and in the whole Oeconomy of Nature, than any of our fellow-Creatures, who use and enjoy what is needful for them, without the folly of *admiring*, or the uneasiness of *complaining*.

FROM whence then can you be furnish'd with Reasons against *the Immortality of Man*, when, without this supposition, all the *works of Nature* appear to human understanding to be *vain*, and *unaccountable*; and, on the other side, when all the Objections you can possibly raise against *God*, and *Providence*, may be fairly urged as so many Proofs of a *Future State*?

AND if no *probable Reasons* can be found to induce you to *believe* that *there is no future State*, what can dispose and incline you to *hope* there is none?

SUPPOSING we were all of us to *perish entirely, Soul and Body*; what satisfaction could this Thought give us? *Quid habet ista res aut latabile, aut gloriosum?* What matter of joy or triumph could this afford us?

THAT wise and learned Heathen *Tully* had his Soul so possess'd with the expectation of *Immortality*, as openly to declare, that, were

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it

it possible for him to be mistaken in his Opinion, he should be very unwilling to know it : He desired to enjoy his *Error* ; he was afraid of being robbed even of this *false Hope*, this *pleasing Delusion*. And why should we not all be affected in the same manner? Were it nothing else but a *Dream*, a mere *Vision of the night*, yet why should we desire to be awaked out of this Dream, when our waking Thoughts cannot present us with any image so agreeable and entertaining as this ? Could it be certainly proved to us, that there is *no future State* ; we should then be *as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty : Or as when a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath appetite*. For so do we *naturally* hunger and thirst after *Immortality*, and are continually reaching after it, and enjoying the prospect ; that, should we once be convinced that there is no such thing to be expected, all our Desires would remain unsatisfied, and our Soul would faint within us ; because we should then find our selves destitute of all the proper nourishment and support of *thinking Beings*. Neither is this the worst of the case ; but when we considered

sidered our selves as confined to this short uncertain period of Life; where we are ill provided with necessaries, busied in little insignificant imployments, engaged in fruitless pursuits, encompassed with a train of evils and calamities, running to and fro in quest of trifles, and laying snares, and digging pits for one another, till we all fall into the same bottomless gulph together: Such considerations and reflections as these would make us despise and abhor our selves, and *curse the day wherein we were born*, had we no hopes, after we had *made our Bed in the darkness*, of seeing *the light* again without *misery*, and of enjoying *Life* without *bitterness of Soul*. And, shall we give up all these glorious hopes our selves? Shall we make that the Object of our Wishes, which is the first Desire of the Soul, and the constant Endeavour of Nature to avoid? Let us examine our selves more closely, and see how we can bear the Thought of losing our whole Being for ever.

NOW, the best turn that can be given to this absurd Notion, is, that what puts an end to our Being, will also put an end to all the *Pain* and *Travel* we endure in Life. When we go down to the Grave, we shall find *rest*,

and *quiet*, and *security*; there we shall *cease from Trouble*; we shall *rest from our Labours*; we shall be *free from the Oppressor*. But will not our *Glory* and our *Pomp* cease with us? Will not our *Mirth* also *cease*, and the *Noise of them that rejoice* be at an end? Will not all our *purposes* be broken off, and our *thoughts* perish? And must we not quit all those *views* and *prospects* of good to come, by which alone our Spirits are enabled to bear up under the *evil* that was *present*? And, if all this must be allowed, (as to be sure it must) this amounts to a plain confession of the whole Argument; that, *if there be no future State, Man was made in vain*: for certainly it would have been much better for us *never to have been born*, than to enter into Life only to walk cross the stage, or to act a short part, and then appear no more; and nothing can give us a more contemptible notion of *human condition*, than to suppose, that the most desirable *End* of the longest and happiest Life is, to *live no longer*.

ANOTHER Plea, that is commonly offer'd in behalf of *Annihilation*, is, that this Doctrine will deliver Men from the *fear of future Punishment*, and make Life go off more easily than it would do under such a trou-

troublesome apprehension. But, who are they that are afraid? Are *you* so weak and foolish, who pretend to deny a *future State*? This is to own your selves to be *wicked*, and to have *deserved* punishment: And how can you entertain such vile dishonourable Thoughts of your selves? If there be a *future State*, why should you not expect as good a portion in it as any of your Brethren? From whence proceeds that secret whisper in your Breasts, that, if you should hereafter be brought before the Judgment-seat of God, you must needs be *condemned*? The *innocent* and the *virtuous* have no such fears about them; they think of nothing but *Crowns* and *Kingdoms*, *Rivers of Pleasure*, and *everlasting Joy*: And, when they are told of *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing of Teeth*, the *Worm that never dies*, and the *Fire unquenchable*, none of these images terrify, or disturb them. But, if you shall be found in the number of those, *Qui se totos libidinibus, dedidissent, atque flagitiis se inquinassent, vel in republicâ violandâ fraudes inexpiabiles concepissent*: If you have abandoned your selves to a profligate, vicious course of Life; or have been guilty of any villainous Designs against the publick; then
you

you do well to *fear* and *tremble* at the thoughts of a *Judgment to come*: But the best way to be rid of this fear, would be, to *believe* and *repent*, and to *sin no more*; and not to go about to persuade yourselves, that you shall not *for all these things be brought into Judgment*.

BUT perhaps you will pretend that you are not afraid *yourselves*; but you look upon it as a generous thing, to deliver *others* from this unnecessary Torment, and to contribute what you can to the Ease and Cheerfulness of *Mankind in general*. But do you indeed think, that it would be better for the World to have all *fear of future punishment* banish'd out of it? Would Men be more careful of their own Honour and Reputation, more just and true to one another, less insolent and oppressive in a high station, or more patient and submissive in a low condition; were they sure never to be called to an account hereafter for their falshood, injustice, cruelty, or any other wickedness or abomination they were guilty of here? No certainly! *the terrors of the Lord*, whether *true* or *false*, are not altogether *vain* with regard to the welfare and quiet of Men in this World, since by constant experience in every Age, 'tis found, that *the*
dread

dread of a Judgment to come hath suppressed abundance of wickedness, which no *human punishments* could have reached; and a great deal more, which the fear of all that *Man* could inflict would not have been sufficient to restrain.

IT is better *not to be* at all, than *to be miserable*, that must be granted; and consequently, were there no other choice to be made, you have certainly *chosen the better part*: But if any *other state* be possible; if we *may live again*, and *be happy*, and *continue for ever*, (as 'tis easily conceived we *may*) why should we not desire *Happiness* and *Immortality in another World*, when we are constantly wishing for them in *this*, where we know at the same time that it is utterly *impossible* to obtain either? Could we secure but one of these Blessings to our selves here, we should have more reason than we now have for looking no farther. Were we *perfectly easy* and *joyful* all the while we lived, we should have a fairer excuse for not *considering our latter end*, for not thinking of any *change* that *is to come*: Or were we sure of being *immortal here*, however the Pleasures and Troubles of Life were blended, we should be better justified in not desiring to quit the *present* pos-

possession of a poor wretched being, where the Evil is sweetned with some returns of Good, for a more glorious and perfect state *hereafter*. But, since none of us can be either *happy*, or *immortal*, in this World, with what shew of Reason can we pretend to despise a *future State*? Nay, how is it possible for us to be willing to part with all our hopes of entring upon a new Scene, after this is shut up? How can we be content to lay ourselves down to sleep, with a full assurance that we shall never wake any more? Or, how can we be pleased to go into *the land of darkness*, without ever wishing to see the light again? These are not *natural* Thoughts; such a prospect as this does no ways satisfy our *Reason*, our *Imagination*, or our *Desire*. And therefore it is much better for you not to think, or reason at all about the matter, if you are afraid of being convinced, that there is a *future State*. You had much better shut your Eyes before you come to the Precipice, and leap boldly into the Gulph, than stand upon the brink doubting, and trembling, and looking about, and searching every where for Arguments to persuade your selves, that 'tis possible you may receive no harm by the fall.

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THE true proper Views of the Soul are *Happiness*, and *Immortality*; and no Man *willingly* foregoes the hopes of either. *Mortality* can no more be our first choice than *Misery*; but, if we must die, 'tis natural to wish that we may not *die*, and *be miserable* too: And this is the genuine result of all that ever has been, or ever can be, said against a *Life*, and a *Judgment to come*. And therefore I cannot but conclude, that, if you are Men of Sense and Reason, and will give your selves leave seriously to weigh the argument I have laid before you, you must needs acknowledge that *there is a future State*; or, at least, that it is very *reasonable to believe so*, however you may wish it were otherwise.

AND, if you find your selves disposed to yield to the proof that has been given of this Doctrine, let not this poor single Prejudice overbear your Understanding, That the Person who offers it, is one that believes in *Revelation*, tho' he has not taken his Argument from thence. Do not refuse to hearken to the *voice of Reason*, which is plain, because you perceive the *hands of a Christian* which you distrust. 'Tis the Doctrine of *Socrates*, and of *Plato*, and *Tully*, that I propose to you; wise and learned Men, who never heard of

Revelation: Men that were in no respect byas'd by the *Superstition* of the Countries where they lived, nor imposed upon by the *Craft* either of *Statesmen*, or *Priests*; nor deluded by the *Tales of Poets*. Look into their Writings, and see with what strength of Reason they assert their own *Immortality*, and with what noble confidence they wait for *another Life*. Read over the Discourses that *Socrates* made to his Countrymen just before his death, and there you will perceive for what *Hopes sake* he was content to die; with what views his Soul was entertain'd, while he held the cup of poyson in his hand; with what glorious expectations he took his leave of this World; with what joy and satisfaction he began his flight into the upper Regions. And is there nothing of this Great Man now left? Not so much as a *Ghost*, or *Shade*, or any fleeting *Image* of that *exalted Soul*, which talked, and reasoned, and acted so much above the powers of a weak decrepit *Body*, which it despised, and freely resigned to *Dust* and *Corruption*? It is hard indeed to conceive; but this, and many more shocking absurdities must be admitted, if you will deny a *future State*: For you cannot give up this Doctrine, without giving up your *Reason*

at the same time ; without renouncing your pretensions to all the *advantages* and *privileges of human Nature* ; and without declaring, that this whole System of Things, which we call *the World*, as far as Man's Knowledge or Concern reaches, is altogether vain and useless.

BUT, before I press you any farther to subscribe to this grand Article of *a future State*, I will deal sincerely with you, and tell you what I apprehend the unavoidable consequence of such Belief will be : And it is this ; that when you are once thoroughly and heartily convinced that *there is another World*, you will never be able to withstand the Proofs that are brought of *the Christian Religion* ; as I shall shew you very briefly.

IN the first place then it is plain, that *a future State of Happiness and Misery* necessarily implies some *present Rule of Life*, according to which Men are to order their behaviour *here*, and according to which they will be judged *hereafter*. And where shall we find this Rule ? What *Man* shall be allowed to prescribe to us ? Shall we take *Plato*, or *Tully*, *Seneca*, or *Epicletus*, for our
O 2 guide ?

guide? In their Works we may find many noble strokes of *Natural Religion* or *Morality*; but *the Scriptures*, by the confession of all that have read them, whether they believe them to be *from Heaven*, or *of Men*, contain a fuller, and more perfect draught of *Morality*, than all the *Heathen* Authors together. This being granted, there can be no dispute, but we shall be better disposed to submit to what is there written, and shall take greater satisfaction in performing what is there required of us, if we can but persuade our selves that it comes from God himself, from whom we received our *Being*, and by whom we shall be *rewarded*, or *punished*, than we should be if we were to follow only the dictates of our *own Reason*, or the directions of *other Men*.

A N D if we think it most proper to take our *Rule of living* from *the Scriptures*, and endeavour all we can to conform our selves to *the Christian Morality*; we can have no reasonable Objection against the Doctrine of a *Saviour*, through whom we may expect to have all our *transgressions* of that Rule *pardoned*; and who will render our *sincerity* and *repentance* as acceptable to God as *perfect obedience*.

NEITHER

NEITHER will that which is *revealed* to us concerning *the Resurrection of the Body*, when duly considered, appear *incredible*; on the contrary, it will rather strengthen the *natural* notions we have of a *future State*: For (as *Tully* observed in his time) the great difficulty that is found in believing such a State, arises chiefly from hence, That it is hard to conceive how the *Soul* can subsist by it self, without the *Body*: But when we are assured, that, upon quitting this *house of clay*, there is a *glorious* and *incorruptible Body* to be put on, which will be every way suitable to those *spiritual* faculties, the operation of which is very much obstructed by our *present Bodies*, our knowledge of this great Article is rendered more *easy* and *sensible*.

BUT I will enter no farther upon this subject with you, because I am very sensible that I have already set before you more than you will be able to digest easily. I shall conclude all with this plain reflection; that, if your lusts are too strong to yield to the Proofs of a *future State*, you ought to change your Language, and always talk in the style of *Unbelievers*: You should never, upon any occasion, use such words as *Virtue*, *Honour*, *Duty*, *Conscience*, or the like: You must lay
aside

afide all notions of *Natural Religion*, *Morality*, and *Justice*, and fairly own your true and only Principles to be these, *viz.* that every Man may please himself in what manner he thinks fit ; and, that every Man may pursue his pleasure, or his interest, whatever it be, in any way that he shall judge safe, or expedient. And then (if you are not very much beholden to the Goodness of those that believe another State) you will be sure to find a *Hell upon Earth*, without the least ground to hope that you shall escape one hereafter.

F I N I S.

